

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A form processing device for reading a field data  
file storing data to be overlaid onto a defined field  
in a form, and overlaying data of the field data file  
5 onto a field in the form, the form processing device  
comprising:

determination means for determining, if the data  
of the field data file is description specifying an  
external file, whether the description of the data is  
10 in a URL format;

overlaying means for downloading the external file  
from a network server in compliance with Internet  
protocols and overlaying the data of the downloaded  
external file onto the field in the form if the  
15 description is determined to be in a URL format by the  
determination means.

2. A form processing method for reading a field data  
file storing data to be overlaid onto a defined field  
20 in a form, and overlaying data of the field data file  
onto a field in the form, the form processing method  
comprising:

a determination step of determining, if the data  
of the field data file is description specifying an  
25 external file, whether the description of the data is  
in a URL format;

an overlaying step of downloading the external file from a network server in compliance with Internet protocols and overlaying the data of the downloaded external file onto the field in the form if the  
5 description is determined to be in a URL format at the determination step.

3. A program for causing a computer to execute form processing of reading a field data file storing data to  
10 be overlaid onto a defined field in a form, and overlaying data of the field data file onto a field in the form; the program comprising:

a determination step of determining, if the data of the field data file is description specifying an  
15 external file, whether the description of the data is in a URL format;

an overlaying step of downloading the external file from a network server in compliance with Internet protocols and overlaying the data of the downloaded  
20 external file onto the field in the form if the description is determined to be in a URL format at the determination step.

4. The program according to claim 3; further  
25 comprising a storing step of storing the external file downloaded based on a predetermined URL from the

network server, into a local drive in association with the URL;

wherein the overlaying step downloads the external file specified in the field data file from the network server and overlays the data of the downloaded external file onto the field in the form if the description is determined to be in a URL format at the determination step and the URL does not correspond to any of URLs of the external files stored at the storing step.

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5. The program according to claim 4; wherein the overlaying step downloads the external file from the network server and overlays the data of the downloaded external file onto the field in the form if the time stamp of the external file stored at the storing step is older than the time stamp of the external file in the network server specified in the field data file, even if the description is determined to be in a URL format at the determination step and the URL corresponds to the URL of the external file stored at the storing step.

6. The program according to claim 4; wherein the overlaying step reads the data of the external file stored at the storing step and overlays it onto the field of the form if the description is determined to be in a URL format at the determination step and the

URL corresponds to the URL of the external file stored at the storing step, and furthermore, if the time stamp of the external file stored at the storing step is not older than the time stamp of the external file in the network server specified in the field data file.

7. The program according to claim 5; wherein, if an external file identical to the downloaded external file is already stored in the local drive, the storing process deletes the external file already stored and stores the downloaded external file in the local drive.

8. The program according to claim 4; wherein the storing step stores the downloaded external file in the local drive if it is smaller than a predetermined file capacity.

9. The program according to claim 4; wherein the storing step deletes an external file stored in the local drive if the file capacity of the downloaded external file is larger than the free space of the local drive.

10. The program according to claim 3; wherein, if the field associated with the data of the field data file is a field defined as one for a file-type data, the determination step determines that the data of the

field data file is description specifying the external file, and determines whether the data of the field data file determined to be the description specifying the external file is described in a URL format.

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